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CABBY.

'Lost on Saturday night from a cab, a case of tobacconist's goods, in or near Stamford Street.'— 'Lost in a cab, or dropped, a "Plan for saving the Atlantic Cable;" one pound reward.'— 'Left in a cab on Tuesday night, between ten and eleven o'clock, a green fancy work-box, containing two small books, and a white enamelled brooch with blue stone and white pendants.'— 'Left in a Hansom cab, that took a gentleman from the Strand to Ebury Street, a black bag, valuable only to the owner.'— 'Supposed to have been left in a cab, or on the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway, a small leather bag, brass lock.'— 'Left in a cab, at Waterloo Station, on Wednesday last, a black leather bag, containing two books, of no value except to the owner.'— 'Lost off a cab, near the Waterloo Station, a leather case, containing patterns of cloth, useless to any but the owner.'— 'Three pounds reward for a black portmanteau, left in a cab which took a gentleman to the Great Eastern Railway.'

Cabby thinks that articles of this kind ought to be—not exactly *lost*, like the Banda and Kirwee booty which we are reading so much about, and which employs seventeen solicitors and thirty-seven learned counsel to settle—but lawful prize, plums in his scanty pudding, lucky drawings in a lottery containing many blanks. Whether they are so or not, depends a good deal on the carefulness of the hirer. If he (or she) takes a note of the number of the cab, say No. 999, he has a certain hold upon cabby, a mode of binding him over to good-behaviour. But very few people do this, least of all such folks as have the remarkable quality of leaving their property behind them. We may be pretty certain that persons who so foolishly forgot the parcel of tobacconists' goods, the green fancy work-box, the numerous black bags, the black portmanteau, and the patterns of cloth, have not usually the forethought necessary for taking the number of their cab. They are thinking of other things when they enter; they are thinking of other things when they alight; the property is

lost, and then they get bewildered. Sometimes they advertise how much they will give to the restorer of the lost property; sometimes they take refuge in the vague 'handsomely rewarded.' Concerning the 'Plan for saving the Atlantic Cable' (probably a manuscript intended for the press), let us hope that it is found by this time; the welfare of two continents may perchance depend upon it.

Cabby, as we have said, thinks he ought to keep the waifs and strays thus found in his vehicle; he may not say so, but he thinks so, nevertheless. The commissioners of police entertain a different opinion. Any property left in a cab, in accordance with an express clause in an express act of parliament, must be taken by the driver to the nearest police station, within twenty-four hours, unless claimed and restored before that time. The losers of the property must make application at the office of the commissioners of police in Great Scotland Yard. If already in the hands of the police, and if sufficiently described and identified, the property will be delivered up on payment of any expenses incurred, and of such *douceur* to the driver as may be determined by the commissioners. We can all of us easily understand how varied are the circumstances which may prevent the loser from making formal application at a particular office, and how much his chance is lessened if he has taken no note of the number of the cab. Hence the advertisements in the daily papers, which cabby no doubt occasionally profits by. Even with all the irregularities in this matter, it is said that the lost property restored by cabmen amounts in value to ten thousand pounds in a year.

There is much that is curious and anomalous in cabby's position. He says the law will not allow him to be a free-trader; seeing that the price for his services, the fare per mile, is determined for him whether he will or not. The public, on the other hand, declare that he is a free-trader, who makes free with more than his proper fare whenever an opportunity offers for so doing. The legislature and the magistracy seem to be deeply impressed with an opinion that cabby is not to be trusted.

This cab-law is a remnant of an old state of things, that has lasted longer in this particular branch of trade than in most others. Hackney-coaches began to be used in London towards the end of the reign of James I.; Taylor, the Water-poet, was a bitter enemy to them, on account of their interference with his trade as a waterman. He spoke in mockery of 'two leash of oyster-wives who hired a coach to carry them to the Green Goose Fair at Stratford the Bow; and as they were hurried between Aldgate and Mile End, they were so be-madam'd, be-mistress'd, and ladyfied by the beggars, that the foolish women began to swell with a proud supposition of imaginary greatness, and gave all their money to the mendicanting canters.' In another place, he spoke of the unfitness of the ill-paved streets and roads for the reception of such vehicles: 'It is a most uneasy kind of passage in coaches on the paved streets of London, wherein men and women are so tossed, tumbled, jumbled, rumbled, and crossing of kennels, dunghills, and uneven ways.' These coaches seem to have been kept for hire in the yards or stables of the owners; but in 1634, one Captain Bailey, quitting the sea for the land, established a coach stand. He provided four hackney-coaches, put the drivers in livery, and appointed them to take their station near the May Pole in the Strand; he laid down a tariff of fares which the men were to charge. What became of the gallant captain, we do not know; but the system evidently suited the public, for other speculators started in the same line. Charles I., and after him Cromwell, tried, by proclamation, to keep down the number of hackney-coaches, but all in vain; the people liked them, and would have them. A century ago, there were no less than a thousand of these vehicles in the metropolis. The government deemed it a good opportunity to get a little revenue out of them, in the form of licence-duty.

They were, throughout the long reign of George III., divided into two classes—the hackney-coach, to accommodate four persons (or six on a pinch); and the hackney-chariot, to accommodate two: the vehicles being drawn by two horses each. O the fun that used to be made of old jarvey! He took life easily. He buried himself in a multiplicity of capes. In cold weather, with his every-way 'great' coat upon him, he realised to the life Tom Hood's picture of a stage-coachman—

With back too broad to be conceived
By any narrow mind.

When he was having his bit or his sup at the nearest hostelry, he was not wont to hurry himself to attend to a 'fare.' Why should he disturb his own comfort to provide comfort for others? Why, indeed! Tom and Jerry were wont to play him tricks; harlequins are known to have bewildered him by jumping in and out of the windows as soon as his back was turned; and ventriloquists perplexed him by making him believe that half-a-dozen people at the very least were in his coach.

Cabby, as we now know him, was born in the year 1823. In other words, the Parisian *cabriolet* was introduced into London in that year. The old jarvey fought a fierce battle against it, but was ultimately obliged to yield; the new vehicle was cleaner, swifter, and cheaper than the old, which it gradually superseded. How the word *cabriolet* became shortened into *cab*, need not be told. But what an odd lot those first cabs were! The

builders did not know where to put the driver; they perched him here, they poked him there, to ascertain how best a single-horse vehicle could be balanced on the supporting framework. The first cab was a kind of open-hooded chaise, in which the driver and the fare sat side by side on the same seat. A comic song, greatly in favour at that time, spoke of it as

A thing with a kiver to it,
Called a cabriolet.

To this succeeded another form of cab with a curious little seat on the right-hand side of the vehicle, leaving room for two passengers on the principal seat. Next was introduced a queer-looking affair, very much like a slice from an omnibus, with the driver in front, a door behind, and two seats to hold one person each, sitting sideways as in an omnibus. Then came the four-wheeled cab, the 'four-wheeler' that has flourished ever since, the most successful and generally useful of all the varieties. By affording space for four passengers, cabby has an opportunity of earning more than by the smaller vehicles that preceded it. Lastly, appeared the patent cab, with the low frame, the large wheels, the open front, the fast-trotting horse, and the perched-up seat behind, on which cabby sits in rather a dare-devil manner—ready to pitch head-foremost over his cab on the smallest provocation. Mr Hansom was the first patentee of cabs in this form; and *Hansoms* they have been ever since.

Cabby was brought under act of parliament in 1832; and certainly the legislature seems to have viewed him as a dreadful fellow, binding him down with all sorts of restrictions as to what he might or might not do. Twenty years later, a still more cogent act was passed; and then cabby resolved that he *wouldn't* stand it. He and his *confrères* struck in 1853. At one particular midnight hour, all the cabbies drove home to their stables; and Lords and Commoners, whose private carriages were not in waiting, had to walk home from the two Houses. Next morning early, not a cab was to be seen. In vain Paterfamilias sent his housemaid to find a cab to convey him to a railway station; no cab could Betty find; he had to trudge on foot with his carpet-bag—and lost the train. Counsel, solicitors, merchants, City traders, all who had not private vehicles, were nonplussed. The trains brought their usual numbers of passengers to the metropolis during the day; but there were no cabs to carry away the luggage. The Companies did their best. They ferreted out all the old omnibuses which could with any safety be used; they improvised carts, barrows, and hucksters' vans; porters and messengers of all kinds were at a premium; flies and glass coaches came forth into light; and telegrams were sent to distant towns for all the vehicles that could be spared. This continued three days; after which cabby gave way; he found that society and the press were against him, so he returned to work.

Cabby's position at the present day is not much more definite than in past times. He is sometimes at loggerheads with his employers; on other occasions, he and the police differ in opinion; while he is almost every day of his life at war with the public, either making or receiving accusations. Concerning the cabs themselves, there are more than six thousand now in the metropolis. They

are owned, some by men of considerable means, some by petty jobbers, and others by the men who drive them. A well-built cab, whether 'four-wheeler' or 'Hansom,' costs about fifty pounds, and the harness five pounds; but there are makers, or rather cab-cobblers, who patch up a wretched affair for a very small sum, and let it out on easy terms to cabby, who thus becomes a sort of petty master. The man buys a cheap horse, an equally cheap set of harness, and hires the cobbled cab at ten shillings a week; he may either drive it himself, or let it out at a profit to a driver who has no capital at all. A good horse for a good four-wheeler costs from sixteen to twenty-five pounds; while a Hansom sometimes boasts of a horse worth twenty to thirty pounds; but we need only to glance at some of these wretched animals to see how far their average value is below this. A careful owner will give his horse thirty pounds of provender per day, oats, beans, and chaff; whereas many of the poor beasts have every motive to imitate Oliver Twist, and 'ask for more.' Some owners allow two horses per cab per day, making provision for illness, accidents, &c.; while others have five horses for two cabs. Altogether, there are supposed to be about thirteen thousand horses. The trade is certainly a precarious one. Weather, luck, holidays, accidents, dishonesty—all combine to give a speculative character to it. An owner of several cabs at the east end lost three thousand pounds, and then gave way; the Great Eastern Railway lost four thousand pounds in four years by an injudicious cab-contract; one man lost one thousand six hundred pounds in three months; and another found that six hundred pounds was absorbed in one year for accidents, compensation, and law expenses. The smaller owners are said to be generally in an atmosphere of debt and bill-discounting. The larger owners, who take some pride in their stables as well as in their vehicles and horses, employ one horse-keeper to every six horses; but sometimes one poor drudge is required to look after ten horses.

The drivers themselves are subject to as many uncertainties as their employers. Sometimes cabby keeps about one-third of the gross earnings, giving two-thirds to the owner. At other times, a sort of tariff is laid down, to the effect that he must bring home a certain definite sum to his master every day; this definite sum is named so low as eight shillings for a four-wheeler, and ten for a Hansom, and so high as sixteen shillings for the former, and eighteen for the latter. It is evident that these discrepancies point to wide differences in the masters, the men, the horses, and the cabs. It is popularly said that cabby gets about three shillings a day; if this be all, then we must say he works very hard for his money—early and late, rain and snow, wind and sleet; but it is scarcely possible that this can be the average. Some of the men are brutal to the horses, dishonest to the owners, and insolent to the public; and it is rather hard to the respectable cabby that his good name should be tarnished by being mixed up with these roughs. The larger owners keep a kind of black-book among themselves, containing the names of men who have been found faithless and unreliable. Sometimes the owner loses considerably by these fellows. The *Times*, in connection with some curious statistics relating to the cab-trade, lately stated: 'A newly-engaged driver kept a valuable horse and good cab out for eighteen hours, during

which time he had been to Hounslow and elsewhere, having a spree with a set of roughs. He was caught by his master at two o'clock in the morning, drunk inside his cab, with a rough on the box furiously driving him about. When brought to the police-court, he was only fined five shillings—paid, of course, out of what money belonging to his master he had in his pocket. In this case, the master lost his horse, which was never again of any use, and the police gained five shillings fine, which was really the master's.' The loiterers, the cabmen who tout for customers instead of going to a stand, are not to be trusted; their cabs are generally wretched things, hired at a small rental. Most police cases against cabmen are said to relate to these loiterers. Licences to cabmen are given too readily. A badge is given for five shillings to a man with a recommendation from some shopkeeper or other, without in any way testing whether it is worthily bestowed.

There is something clumsy and ineffective about all this. Why should cabs and cab-drivers be subject to so many anomalies?

MIRK ABBEY.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—RALPH'S APPEAL.

HOWEVER Dr Haldane, at my Lady's own request, may have misrepresented to the young folks at the Abbey the motives which had caused her flight, he told them truth as respected Derrick. That unfortunate man had indeed met with the frightful mischance described. When he left Mary Forest on the previous night, his mind confused with vague revengeful passion, and his brain muddled with blows, as well as with the spirits he had of late taken in such quantities, and the effects of which were beginning to tell upon his exhausted frame, he had staggered up Mirkland Hill almost like one in a dream. The night was pitchy dark, and although ever and anon a burst of light came forth from the fireworks in the Abbey grounds, they were of course perfectly useless for his guidance. The top of the hill being quite bare of trees, was less obscure than the way he had already come, and in any other circumstances he could scarce have come to harm; but as it was, stumbling blindly on with his head low, he entered the mill-yard through that fatal gap in the wall, without even knowing he had left the high-road. The very roaring of the sails, which revolved dangerously near the ground, might have warned him, but that his ears were already occupied with the seething and tumult of his own brain; and when the terrible thing struck him, before which he went down upon the instant as the ox falls before the poleaxe, he never so much as knew from what he had received his hurt. There he lay for more than an hour, underneath the whirling sails, which one after another came round to peer over his haggard face, gashed with that frightful wound. The lad in charge knew nothing of what had happened, being engaged in the top story watching the fireworks in the park beneath; but about midnight he stopped the mill, and descending with his lantern, its rays by chance fell upon Ralph's prostrate body. Some persons returning from the festivities at the Abbey happened to be going by at that very time, and with their assistance he was

carried across the road to the lodge at Belcomb (there being no sort of accommodation for one in his condition at the mill), and from thence to Madame de Castellan's little cottage.

That lady was for the time, as she had stated in her letter to Sir Richard, the sole inhabitant of Belcomb; but with the injured man, old Rachel and her husband the gatekeeper of course arrived, and the former did what she could as sick-nurse until the arrival of Dr Haldane, for whom a messenger was at once despatched. The old Frenchwoman, who was aroused with difficulty, and characteristically kept them waiting at the door while she made herself fit for the reception of company, was so shocked and terrified by what had happened, that she was at first of no use at all. She had expressed herself in broken English as being very glad to be of any service to the poor sufferer while they were bearing him within, and had even busied herself in procuring hot water and bandages; but no sooner did she catch sight of his ghastly face, seamed with that cruel gash, than all her resolution appeared to desert her, and she swooned away. By the time the doctor arrived, however, she had established herself in the sick-room, and although he had described her as incapable of doing much in the way of tendance, she was at least doing her best.

As for Ralph, he lay breathing stertorously, but quite motionless and unconscious. His mighty chest rose and fell, but by no means equably; his large brown hairy hands lay outstretched before him on the white coverlet; his face washed clean indeed from the recent blood-stains, but with the tangled beard still clotted with gore. It seemed strange that that powerful English frame of his should lie there so helplessly, while Madame, with her snow-white hair and delicate fragile hands, was ministering to him with such patient care; she that must have been his senior, one would have thought to look at them, by at least twenty years. Perhaps it was the sense of this contrast which caused the doctor to glance from the one to the other so earnestly, even before he commenced his examination of the wounded man.

'Will he live?' asked Madame in English. 'God knows,' added she with trembling accents, 'that I have no other wish within my heart but to hear you say "Yes,"'

'Of course, Madame,' returned the other with meaning, 'I do not pay you so ill a compliment as to suppose you to wish him dead, because he inconveniences you by his presence here; but I cannot say "Yes" or "No." He is terribly hurt. The spine is injured; and there are ribs broken which I cannot even look to now. But it is here—he pointed to the forehead—"where the worst danger lies: unhappily, the mischief has been done when he was—in the worst possible state to bear such a blow in such a place.'

'Does he know, doctor?'—

'He knows nothing, Madame; perhaps he may never know. You must not speak so much, however; or, if so, pray use your native tongue. It is better, if consciousness does return, that the brain should be kept quite quiet. I think you had better retire to your room, Madame, and leave myself and Rachel to manage.'

'Yes, yes, we can do very well, lady,' assented old Rachel. 'This is not a place for such as Madame, is it, sir? If we could only get Mistress Forest, now; she is first-rate at nursing; she nursed me for three whole nights last winter, when I was

most uncommon bad with the shivers, caught a-comeing from Dalwynch in the spring-cart—and the cover on it, when it don't rain, is worse than nothing, for there's such a draught drives right through it!—'

'Yes, yes,' interrupted the doctor impatiently; 'you are quite right, Rachel. We'll send for Mistress Forest the first thing in the morning; she can easily be spared from the Abbey, now my Lady's away.'

'Ah, the more's the pity!' returned old Rachel. 'And this looks almost like a judgment, don't it, sir, that this poor man, who was so rude to my dear mistress—or wanted to be, as I have heard—should have been carried in under her own roof here, feet foremost?'—

'Be silent, woman!' broke in Madame de Castellan with severity. 'We have nothing to do with Lady Lisgard's affairs here. This house is my house for the present; this wounded man is my guest.'

'Speak French, speak French, Madame,' exclaimed the doctor imploringly. 'Did you not hear me say so before? You had much better return to bed.'

'No, no,' returned Madame, in her native tongue; 'I cannot do it. I will be prudent, I will be careful for the future; but I cannot leave him, until, at all events, Mary Forest comes. O send her—send her, and let this woman go, whose presence is intolerable to me.'

Accordingly, in his visit to Belcomb about noon next day, the doctor brought Mistress Forest over with him, who was at once installed as Ralph Derrick's sick-nurse; old Rachel being sent home to the lodge. No change had as yet taken place in the sufferer; but the doctor's practised eye perceived that one was impending. This time, he made a long and earnest examination of his patient.

'Will he live?' asked Madame again, when he had finished, with the same earnestness, nay, even anguish as before.

'There is hope; yes, I think there is hope,' returned the doctor cautiously.

'Thank God for that; I thank Him for His great mercy!' ejaculated Madame with clasped hands and upturned eyes.

'Who is that?' inquired a hoarse voice from the bed. The words were indistinct, and uttered with difficulty, but on every ear within that room they smote with the most keen significance. The two women turned deadly pale; and even the doctor's finger shook as he placed it to his lips, in sign that they should keep silent.

'Hush, my good friend,' said he to the wounded man, whose eyes were now open wide, and staring straight before him; 'you must not talk just now; speaking is very bad for you.'

'Who is that who was thanking God because there was hope of my life?' reiterated Ralph. 'Neither man nor woman has any cause to do that, I'm sure; while some have cause enough to pray that I were dead already, or at least had lost my wits. Doctor—for I suppose you are a doctor—have I lost my wits or not? Am I a sane man, or one not in my right mind?'

'Hush, hush; you are sane enough of course, except to keep on talking thus when I tell you that to speak is to do yourself the most serious harm.'

'You hear him—all you in the room here,'

continued the sick man in a voice which, though low and feeble, had a sort of malignant triumph in it, which grated on the ear. 'This doctor says I am quite sane. He says also that there is hope of my life—just a shadow of a hope. He is wrong there, for I shall die. But, anyhow, I lie in peril of death, and yet in my right mind. Therefore, what I say is to be credited—that, I believe, is the law; and even the law is right sometimes. What I am about to say is Truth—every word of it. I wish to make a statement.—No, I will take no medicines; pen and ink, if I could only write, would be more welcome than the Elixir of Life, but I cannot.' Here a groan was wrung from his parched and bloodless lips. 'O Heaven! the pain I suffer; it is the foretaste of the hell for which I am bound!'

'O sir,' ejaculated Mistress Forest, moving to the bedfoot, so as to shew herself to his staring eyes, 'think of heaven, not of hell. Ask for pardon of God, and not of revenge upon man.'

'Ah, it is you, is it, good wench? I thought that no one else could have wished me well so piously a while ago. You did me an ill turn, although you did not mean to do so, when you let me out of the Cage last night. Was it last night, or a week, or a month ago?'

'It was only last night,' interposed the doctor gravely. 'Now, do not ask any more questions, or I shall have to forbid them being answered. It is my duty to tell you that with every word you speak your life is ebbing away.'

'Then there is the less time to lose,' answered Derrick obstinately. 'As for answering me, I do not want that. All I ask of you is, that you shall listen; and what I say, I charge you all, as a dying man, to remember—to repeat—to proclaim.' Here he paused from weakness.—'Doctor,' gasped he, 'a glass of brandy—a large glass, for I am used to it. I must have it.—Good. I feel stronger now. Do you think, if you took down my words in writing, that I could manage'—here a shudder seemed to shake his poor bruised and broken frame, as though with the anticipation of torture—'to set down my name at the bottom of it?'

'No, my poor fellow—no. You could no more grasp a pen at present than you could rise and leave this house upon your feet. You must feel that yourself.'

'I do—I do,' groaned Ralph. 'It is all the more necessary, then, that you should listen. My real name is not that one by which I have been known at Mirk. It is not Derrick, but Gavestone: the same name, good wench, by which your mistress went before she was married to Sir Robert Lisgard. But that was not her maiden name—no, no. Do you not wonder while I tell you this? or did I speak of it last night, when I was mad with drink and rage?'

'You said something of the sort, sir; but I knew it all before that. You are my Lady's husband, and Sir Richard and the rest are all her bastard children—that is, in the eye of the law.'

'You knew it, did you?' returned Ralph after a pause. 'You were in the plot with her against me, then? I am glad of that. I should be sorry to have left the world fooled to the last; for I thought that you at least were an honest wench, although all the world else were liars. So, after all, you knew it, did you? Well, at all events, it is news to the doctor here.'

'No, sir,' returned the old gentleman, quietly applying some *Eau de Cologne* and water to the

patient's brow; 'I must confess I knew it also.'

'And yet you told nobody!' ejaculated Ralph. 'You suffered this imposture to go on unexposed!'

'I only heard of the facts you speak of—from Lady Lisgard's own lips—two days ago at furthest,' returned Dr Haldane; 'and I certainly told nobody, since the telling could do no good to any human being—not even to yourself, for instance—and would bring utter ruin and disgrace upon several worthy persons.'

'Ha, ha!' chuckled the patient hoarsely; 'you are right there. Disgrace upon that insolent Sir Richard, and on that ungrateful puppy, Master Walter.'

'True,' continued the doctor gravely; 'and upon Miss Letty, who is dear to all who know her, but dearest to the poor and friendless.'

'I am sorry for her,' said Derrick; 'but I am not sorry for my Lady—she that could look me in the face, and hear me tell the story of our early love, and of her own supposed death, to avert which I so gladly risked my life, and all without a touch of pity.'

'No, sir,' with much pity, broke forth Mistress Forest. 'I myself know that her heart bled for you. She never loved Sir Robert as she did you, ungrateful man! She loved you dead and alive; she loves you now, although you pursue her with such cruel hate, and would bring shame upon all her innocent children.'

'Ay, why not?' answered Ralph. 'Have they not had their day, and is it not my turn at last? Who is the woman behind the curtains? Let her stand forth, that I may see her; she, at least, is not a creature of "my Lady," like you and the doctor here, and ready, for her sake, to hide the truth and perpetuate my wrongs. Let that woman stand forth, I say.'

CHAPTER XXXIX.—DYING WORDS.

Thus adjured, Madame de Castellan stepped forward to the same position which Mary Forest had occupied at the foot of the bed: nowhere else could Ralph see her, for he was on his back just as they had first laid him, and could not turn his face a hairbreadth to left or right.

'Who are you?' asked he bluntly. 'I do not remember having seen your face at Mirk.'

'They call me Madame de Castellan,' replied the old lady in good English, 'and I live here at Belcomb by favour of Sir Richard Lisgard.'

'Ah, you have reason, then, to be friends with him and his,' returned the sick man bitterly. 'You will none of you see me righted. Curse you all!'

'I will not see you wronged, if I can help it, sir,' replied the Frenchwoman solemnly, but keeping her eyes fixed always upon the floor.

'Will you not? Well, you have an honest face, I own; but faces are so deceptive! Mistress Forest's face yonder, for instance, is pleasant enough to look upon, but still she plays me false. Master Walter's again—why, he seems to have robbed an angel of his smile, and yet he is base-hearted like the rest; and, lastly, there was my Lucy—not mine now—no, no; but what a sweet look was hers! And there was guile and untruth for you! But that is what I have to tell you. You have said you will not see me wronged, and I must believe you, since there is none else to trust to here. Besides, you are too old to lie; you will be

called to your own account too soon to dare to palter with a dying man. Yes, I am dying fast.—More brandy, doctor—brandy. Ah, that's life itself!—And yet, although you are so old, Madame, I dare say you remember your youthful days, when you were fair—for you were fair, I see—and courted. You were not without your lover, I warrant?

'I was loved, sir,' returned Madame, in low but steadfast tones.

'And did you marry the man you loved?'

'I did, sir. My husband was very dear to me, God knows, though we did not live long together.'

'He died young, did he?'

'Alas, yes, and I was left alone in the world without a friend or a home.'

'His memory did not fade so quickly that you could love and marry another man at once, I suppose?'

'His memory never faded,' replied the old lady gravely, 'for it has not faded now; but after an interval of three years, I married another man.'

'And loved him like the other?'

'No, sir; there is only one true love—at least for a woman. But I was a dutiful wife for the second time; and there were children born to me—three children—inexpressibly dear; and when I lost their father, who loved me, though I could only give him grateful duty in return, I had something to live for still.'

Whether the grief-laden tone of Madame touched him, or the sad story she was telling, Ralph's accents seemed to lose something of their bitterness when he again broke silence.

'But if, lady, your first husband and true lover had, by some wondrous chance, returned, as it might be, from the very grave, and you were satisfied that it was he indeed, and knew him, although he knew you not, and he was living a bad life among bad company, with no one in all the world to call him friend, would you not then have held your arms out to him, and cried: "Come back, come back!" and told him how you had loved him all along?'

'No, sir; not so. If I had been alone, like him, with only my own feelings to consult, I might, indeed, have so behaved; for my heart would have yearned towards him, as it does, Heaven knows, even now. But, sir, in such a case there would not only have been Love to be obeyed, but Duty. If this man were living the wild life you speak of, would he not have made a bad father to my poor children (left in my sole charge and guardianship by a just and noble man), an evil ruler of a well-ordered house, a bad example to all whom I would have had respect him? Nay, worse, would not my acknowledgment of him—which I should otherwise be eager to make, and willing to take upon myself the shame that might accrue to me therefrom—would not that, I say, have brought disgrace on those who had earned it not—have made my own children, lawfully begotten, as I had thought, all Bastards, and soiled the memory of an honest man, their father?'

A long silence here ensued, broken only by the sick man's painful breathing, and the sobs of Mistress Forest, who strove in vain to restrain her tears.

'I thank you, Madame,' said Ralph very feebly: 'you have been pleading without knowing it for one who— Do you see these tears? I did not think to ever weep again. Either your gentle voice—reminding me of the very woman of whom I

had meant to speak so harshly—or perhaps it is the near approach of death which numbs these fingers, that would else be clutching for their revenge—I know not; but I now wish no one harm.—Doctor, you must feed this flame once more; let me but speak a very few words, and then I shall have no more use for Life.—Mary, good wench, come here. You will shortly see again that mistress whom you love so well, and have so honestly served. Tell her— Nay, don't cry; I do not need your tears to assure me that you feel for poor Ralph Gavestone—castaway though he be. I heard your "Thank God" when the doctor said (though he was wrong there) that there was hope for me. Those were very honest words, Mary.'

'I did not say them!' ejaculated the waiting-maid earnestly. 'O Madame, tell him who it was that said them.'

'It was I,' murmured Madame de Castellan, coming close to the bedside, and kneeling down there.

'You, lady! Why should you pray so earnestly that I might live, whose death would profit many, but whose recovery none?'

'Because I have wronged you, Ralph. Yes, Ralph! You know me now. Do not ask to see my patched and painted face again, because it is not mine, but listen to my voice, which you remember. I am your own wife, Lucy, and I love you, husband mine.'

'She loves me still,' murmured the dying man: 'she owns herself my wife, thank God, thank God!' The tears rolled down his cheeks, and over his rough and ghastly face a mellow softness stole, like the last gleam of sunset upon a rocky hill. Dr Haldane rose and noiselessly left the room, beckoning Mary to follow. The dying husband and his wife were left to hold their last interview alone.

'What I have been telling you, Ralph, as the history of another, is my own. I have never forgotten you. I have loved you all along. Forgive me, if I seem to have sacrificed you to—to those it was my duty to shield from shame. I could not bear to see disgrace fall upon my children, and so I fled from them, in hopes to save them from it. And yet I loved them so that I could not altogether leave them, but took this cottage in another name, and under this disguise, in order to be near them.* O lover, husband, who saved my life at peril of his own, a mother's heart was my excuse—be generous and noble as of old—forgive me!'

'Forgive you!' gasped the sick man: 'nay, forgive me! How could I ever have sought to do you wrong! My own dear Lucy!' In an instant she had plucked away so much of her disguise as was about her face and head, and was leaning over him with loving eyes.

'How many years ago, wife, is it since you kissed me last?' murmured the dying man. 'My outward sight is growing very dim; I do not recognise

* The author having been informed by a critical friend that he has exposed himself to the charge of plagiarism, by representing Lady Lisgard as thus assuming the character of another person, begs to state—first, that he has never had the opportunity of reading the powerful novel, *East Lynn* (wherein, as he understands, a similar device is employed); and secondly, that the idea of the metamorphosis is taken from a short story (written by himself) which was published in *Chambers's Journal*, under the title of 'Change for Gold,' so long ago as 1854.

my Lucy's face, although I know 'tis she; but I see her quite clearly sitting in the cottage-porch beside the shining river. How it roars among the rounded stones, and how swiftly it is running to the sea! Round my neck, love, you will presently find the little locket with that dead sprig of fuchsia in it which you gave me when we plighted troth. Let that be buried with me; I have had no love or care for sacred things, but perhaps— They say that God is very merciful; and since He sees into our inmost thoughts, He will know with what reverence I held that simple gift, because it was your own, and you were His. I loved you most, I swear, because you were so pure and good, Lucy. Ah me! I wonder, in the world to come, if I or he—

A piercing cry broke from my Lady's lips. 'Spare me, Ralph—spare me!'

'Yes, yes. It was done for the best, I know. Don't fret, dear heart. Of course you thought me Dead. For certain, I am dying now—fast, fast. Thank God for that! It would have been a woeful thing, having thus found my Own, to have left her straightway, and taken my lone way through the world again, knowing the thing I know. But I would have done it, never fear. Are you sure of those two, Lucy—that were here a while ago—quite sure? My dying curse upon them, if they breathe to human ear our sacred secret! They love you? That is well. I would have all the world to love you; and may all those you love repay that priceless gift with tender duty.' Here he paused, as if to gather together his little remaining strength; and when he spoke again, it was with a voice so low that my Lady had to place her ear quite close to his pale lips to catch his words. But she did hear them, every one. 'The prayers of a man like me may avail nothing, Lucy, but at least they can do no harm. God bless Sir Richard—yes, yes! God bless Master Walter's handsome face! God bless Miss Letty! That's what I said on Christmas-eve with Steve and the rest of them, not knowing whom I spoke of, and I say it now, for are they not my Lucy's dear ones! God bless you, my dear wife. Kiss—kiss.'

Those were the last words of wild Ralph Gavestone. When the doctor and Mistress Forest re-entered that silent room, my Lady was upon her knees beside the pillow; she had closed the dead man's eyes, and folded his palms together, and taken from his neck the locket, but to be returned to him by a trusty hand when the time came.

CURIOSITIES OF NATURAL HISTORY.*

THIS work belongs to that delightful class of which the literature of natural history now presents numerous examples, and of which White's *Natural History of Selborne* was the first, familiar in style, unsystematic, yet truly scientific—the record of original observations, not set down in mere dry notes, but told in pleasant words, as men might tell the story to their friends. Mr Buckland writes as one who is on the best of terms with his readers, takes them

with him in his excursions, and into the society of his friends, introduces them into the very scene of his observations, and makes every subject interesting. His knowledge of natural history is extensive and intimate; he is capable of entering into the most difficult scientific questions; but much of the charm of his work is from the delight which he takes in watching the habits of animals. Mr Buckland does not study mere skins and dry bones, although no one knows better the importance of comparative anatomy, into the investigation of which he sometimes leads us, pointing out the wondrous adaptation of organs to their purposes, and the manifold variety of the Creator's works.

The new series of the *Curiosities of Natural History* embraces a somewhat wider field than the former ones. It is not exclusively devoted to the inferior animals. Man himself is the subject of some interesting papers, which describe abnormal peculiarities of the physical frame, or bring before us strange scenes and remarkable characters. There are also papers on miscellaneous subjects, some of them antiquarian.

The first paper in these volumes is entitled 'Robinson Crusoe at Portsmouth.' The principal subject of it is an old sailor, disabled by the loss of a hand, whom Mr Buckland found paddling about in a small boat at Portsmouth, spending most of his time on the water, and deriving his chief means of subsistence, as well as his chief enjoyment, from hand-line fishing. 'Such a boat it was!—more about the size and shape of the half of a house water-butt than a boat; so rotten, too, that a good kick would have sent it into a thousand bits. The planks started in many places, and there were great holes in the sides, mended with bits of old canvas, leather, and tin. Her bottom was covered with sea-grass and shells; yet in this boat old Robinson Crusoe faces weather in which no ordinary boat could live; he has no fear of the waves.

"I think the waves knows me, sir," said he; "they never hurts me and my boat. We swim over their tops like an egg-shell, and I am out a-fishing in all weathers, particular when a storm abates a bit, because the water thickens, and the fish bites. My boat never ships a drop of water, not so much as there is in that 'ere rum-bottle." The old man winked as he said this. "If I was a rich man, and got a thousand a year, I would still go out a-fishing, for I likes the sport; and I'd go to Greenwich Hospital, but then I'd lose my fishing. I am a very poor man, but I must have my fishing."

Robinson Crusoe was in the practice of fishing where wrecks lay at the bottom of the sea, and with greater success than elsewhere. The reason of this is not difficult to discover. Sea-weeds and barnacles grow upon the wrecks, and marine creatures of many kinds, the food of fish, soon become abundant there. Fish therefore also become abundant. Might not a hint be taken from this for a new expedient in pisciculture? It would be too expensive to sink old ships, in order to procure cod and whiting; but might not some one, having facilities for the purpose, try the experiment of sinking a few worthless trees or bushes, with all their branches, on some muddy or sandy sea-bottom?

We cannot notice all the papers in their order. We pass over the second, 'A Visit to Knaresborough,

* *Curiosities of Natural History*. A New Series. By Frank Buckland, M.A., late Student of Christ Church, Oxford, and Assistant-surgeon 2d Life Guards. Two vols. London, Richard Bentley. 1866.

Yorkshire,' which gives a brief account of the famous Dripping Well. The third is entirely antiquarian; it is very interesting, and shews that Mr Buckland has not forgotten, in his zealous pursuit of natural history, the classic acquisitions of his early years. It is entitled 'A Roman Race-course.' Visiting Borobridge in Yorkshire, an ancient Roman station, Mr Buckland supposes himself to have discovered a Roman race-course, of which the three great blocks of stone, called the *Devil's Arrows*, were the *meta*, or goals; and he felicitously imagines the scene of a Roman Derby-day there, the assemblage of the Roman nobles and gentry residing at Aldborough, with the officers from the great garrison at York, the jockeys and the charioteers; concluding with an accident from the crash of a chariot-wheel on the biggest of the Devil's Arrows—'the cry for the assistant-surgeon of the Ninth Legion, who, of course, was present at the races in the *Harmamaza*, or regimental drag, from York—the queer surgical instruments and ointments!'

In the paper entitled 'Bird-catchers,' we are made acquainted with one of the modes by which song-birds are caught for the London market—by the use of a stuffed bird, limed twigs, and a call-bird. But we learn also, what is much more interesting, that a difference of song can be recognised in the birds of the same species inhabiting different districts, even in the vicinity of London. Mr Jesse, in one of his works, states his belief that there are provincial dialects among birds, and tells us that the song of a Devonshire thrush is very different from that of a thrush in the neighbourhood of London. The subject is very curious, and deserves further attention.—A paper on 'Nightingale-catching' is chiefly interesting from what relates to the imitation of the nightingale's song by human lips. Mr Buckland met with a nightingale-catcher who possessed this power in an astonishing degree, and of course made use of it to attract nightingales. Mr Buckland therefore believes the old story of a man being specially retained by the proprietors of Vauxhall or Spring Gardens, in days gone by, to sit in a bush and sing like a nightingale. He supposes that 'both Mr *Spectator* and Sir Roger de Coverley were grossly humbugged' with the singing of nightingales in Vauxhall. 'I am curious,' he says, 'to know how the "choirs of birds" were managed. I wonder, too, how much the human nightingale who sang under a bush in Vauxhall used to get as his weekly salary from the proprietor of the gardens, who used to boast: "Hear 'em, sir, why, you're sure to hear 'em. We keep a nightingale."'

As might be expected, a considerable part of one of these volumes is devoted to the subject of the salmon. We have an interesting account of a visit to Galway and Connemara, in which notes on the natural history of the salmon are intermixed with notes on other subjects of natural history, with incidents and conversations, and with animated descriptions of scenery. We are carried from Galway to Lough Corrib, the Cong Pass, Lough Maak, and Maam, a barren and desolate place on the Ultima Thule of civilisation, where 'glorious mountain-tops pour down crystal streams, the nursery and breeding-ground of salmon-fry innumerable.' The Cong Pass is a canal, cut at great expense by Mr Ashworth, through the spur of the mountain which separates Lough Mask from Lough Corrib, in the hope of converting Lough Maak and its tributaries into breeding-ground for salmon;

the natural channel by which the waters of Lough Mask flow into Lough Corrib being such that salmon cannot ascend by it. It still remains to be seen if they can ascend by the artificial channel. A further experiment in fish-culture has been made here, in the formation of a large breeding-pond for salmon, in which three hundred thousand impregnated eggs were deposited on the gravel, and in due time the pond became well filled with salmon-fry. But the result exemplifies one of the difficulties which attend fish-culture. The bottom of the pond became covered with mud, and soon swarmed with water-beetles and the larvæ of dragon-flies, by which the young salmon were devoured, so that when Mr Buckland visited it, 'although it was a bright clear day, nothing could be seen moving in the pond but a few little salmon,' all that were left of the multitude concerning which so much hope had been cherished. Catching some of the water-beetles, Mr Buckland put one into a bottle of water, into which he also put a little salmon.

'Spying him from below, the beetle rose straight up at the unfortunate little fish, making direct for him—that peculiar, savage, determined rush that one sees when a bull-dog is slipped at his enemy. In an instant the beetle rose above the salmon, and then pouncing down upon him as a hawk upon an unsuspecting lark, dug its tremendous, scythe-like, horny jaws right into the back of the poor little salmon. The little salmon—a plucky little fellow—fought hard for his life, and swam round and round, up and down, hither and thither, making every effort to escape this terrible murderer, who stuck close as wax to his victim; but it was no use, he could not free himself from his gripe; and while the poor little wretch was giving the few last flutterings of his tail, the water-beetle proceeded coolly to pick out its left eye, and to devour it at once with evident gusto.'

The beetle was condemned to death, and promptly executed by the substitution of whisky for water in the bottle; but as there was no possibility of getting a sufficient quantity of potheen, or administering it to all the beetles in the pond, and the case of the salmon in it was evidently hopeless, the sluice was opened, and they were allowed to take their way to the safer waters of Lough Corrib.

In his observations on the salmon-fishery at Galway, Mr Buckland discovered the explanation of the fact, that the salmon in the sea at the mouth of the river are caught by nets only twelve feet deep, whilst the water is thirty feet deep. The reason is, that the fresh-water of the river floats over the salt-water of the sea, and that the salmon, about to ascend the river, prefer the fresh water to the salt. Yet it appears that the salmon feeds chiefly in the sea, and there only, increases much in size.

We are compelled to pass over many things in these amusing volumes, but cannot forbear from noticing the paper on Porpoises. It relates the endeavours made to procure a live porpoise for the Zoological Gardens of London. Several porpoises have been brought to the Gardens, but they have all died soon after their arrival there. Mr Buckland tells us what anxious care was taken to keep the skin moist by sponging with salt water during a railway journey, and how he administered doses of ammonia and of brandy to an exhausted porpoise in the tank at the Gardens, with evident benefit, although the creature was

too far gone to be saved by such means. But more interesting than this, and far more important, is the account of the anatomy of the porpoise given in the Appendix. The organs of locomotion are very particularly described, and the apparatus by which this air-breathing animal is fitted for its thoroughly aquatic life.

'Now we come to the most difficult problem of all—namely, how to prevent this mammalian air-breathing animal from being every minute of his life subject and very liable to death by drowning, and a most beautiful bit of mechanism we have before us. A porpoise has been most appropriately called a "sea-pig"—a "hog-fish," and when he was on the bench being operated on, his carcass was amazingly like that of a great fat bacon pig. We will therefore take a pig's skull, and make our comparison. In the pig, the nostril runs along the whole of the long nose, through a hole made there on purpose by nature; in the nearly as long-nosed porpoise this hole is soldered up, the upper jaw is quite solid, and with the under jaw is devoted solely to the purpose of catching his food. . . . Upon making a section of the skull of a porpoise, we shall find a curved hole bored through its substance by nature, and the windpipe ends (by the larynx) in this hole, and does not prolong itself into the upper jaw at all. The larynx, or Adam's apple, is also very peculiar in shape; it is elongated like a human finger, and fits accurately into the hole in which it works.'

To prevent the water from entering this windpipe, there is at the crescent-shaped opening of it, a valve formed of the skin, which is opened only when the animal wishes to breathe, and is instantly closed again. Within are the two nostrils, but in these are two valvular prominences, which pass, like the bolt of a double lock, right across the nostrils into cavities on the other side, which they fit accurately. Thus, if water should pass through the outer valve, it is prevented from further progress towards the lungs. But even this is not all. There are two large pouches, as large as oranges, and several smaller ones, above the obstructing processes, into which the water must go, there to remain until the porpoise again comes to the surface to breathe, when all the valves are opened, and it is expelled into the air along with the breath from the lungs.

We abstain from any particular notice of the papers—some of them very interesting—on giants, and other human beings exhibited in shows on account of their physical peculiarities, or of those on shows in general, which Mr Buckland seems to make a point of visiting, whenever opportunity occurs, in hope of seeing something really curious. And many things curious, in different points of view, he has seen and describes. He writes most pleasantly of such shows as the Performing Lions, the Performing Fleas, and the Performing Bull. It is really curious that the flea-trainer, the proprietor of the Performing Fleas exhibition, has to pay an average price of threepence per dozen for the fleas, old women supplying most of them; and in an extreme case, has had to pay sixpence for a flea; also that when he visits the provinces, his wife sends him fleas by post, in the corner of an envelope, remote from the stamp, packed in tissue-paper, and, more wonderful still, that he imports them from Russia, packed in pill-boxes in the finest cotton-wool.

As another extraordinary fact concerning the

trade of London, it may be mentioned that Mr Buckland saw in Jamroch's Animal Store, *six thousand* paroquets, which had been brought in two ships from Australia.

Our author has the tastes of the sportsman, but those of the naturalist prevail over them. He may almost be said to have an affectionate regard for every living creature. More than once he expresses regret that so many sportsmen neglect their opportunities of observing the habits of animals in a state of nature.

He pleads earnestly that the rifle should sometimes be laid down, and the telescope taken up, so that our knowledge of natural history may be extended, even although the game-bag should not be so quickly filled, or the sportsman should not have so many trophies to shew of his success.

Books like the *Curiosities of Natural History* are calculated to diffuse a taste for one of the most interesting and profitable studies that can occupy the human mind. From them also the inexperienced may learn how to observe. Even with regard to the most familiar objects of nature, there is much still to be learned. No one can tell of what importance a single observation may prove, or to what discoveries or what useful applications of knowledge it may lead. And at all events, the observer is brought into contemplation of infinite wisdom and goodness; his own mind is enlarged, elevated, and refined, whilst the record of his observation is a contribution to the common store of knowledge accumulated by mankind.

LOST WILLIE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER II.

NEXT morning, after breakfast, when David had gone to the office, and Willie was off to school, I just slipped on my bonnet, and ran across to the station to see old Luke Moffatt's wife, who had a brother that worked on the branch-line, to whom Hugh Sanderson was doubtless well known, and from whom I might, perhaps, be able to ascertain something as to Hugh's general habits and character. I felt now how little I really knew of this man, to whom I had so carelessly given away my heart, and what a different Hugh he might be when out of sight and hearing of those whose good opinion he cared to keep.

'Yes,' Mrs Moffatt said, 'my brother Jesse knows Hugh Sanderson very well, and has known him a many years, and will no doubt be quite able and willing to tell you all you want to know about him. It was only last Sunday was a fortnight, when Jesse came over to see me and my old man, and have a bit of dinner with us, that I said to him as how I thought there was a bit of courting going on between you and Mr Hugh (excuse me all the same, Miss). Says he to me: "Then I pity the poor wench, whoever she is; for Hugh Sanderson ain't fit to be the husband of any respectable lass." "Why, how's that?" says I. "You ax me no questions, Mariar, an' I'll tell you no lies," says he; and not another word could I get out of him.'

I would not stay to listen to more, but got the address I wanted, and hurried away. It was a

'I have been to Garth Mills.'

'As I thought! To make some inquiry into the character and antecedents of one Hugh Sanderson?'

'Such was certainly the object of my journey,' I said.

'A praiseworthy labour for any young woman! And what have you learned, may I ask?'

'I have learned that you are an habitual drunkard, sir.—And now that you know this, you will perhaps allow me to pass.'

'Gently, Miss Deriton, gently! So you learned that I was an habitual drunkard, eh? But that was not all. You learned something more than that—I can read it in your eyes: something of a sin far blacker, as you look at it, than that other sin of drunkenness. Is it not so?'

'It is,' I said. 'You know what I have heard, there is therefore no occasion for you to allude to it further.—And now, sir, if you have any spark of manhood in you, you will not detain me here any longer against my will.'

'Not detain you here any longer!' he said with an oath. 'By Heaven, I have half a mind to murder you, and bury you in that wood! You cat! You hug yourself, don't you, on your narrow escape from having had a drunkard and a scamp for your husband? Well, maybe you're right; I am not going to dispute the fact. But there's one thing I'd have you bear in mind, Miss Deriton: from this hour, Hugh Sanderson is your enemy; and with me that means a good deal. It means Revenge. If not to-day or to-morrow, if not this year or next year, still at some future time—Revenge! Let me therefore request you not to forget that there is a little score between us, which will one day be settled in full, and in a way that you do not expect. Now go; and may my curse go with you, and cling to you, and never leave you from this hour till the day you die!'

He stepped aside, and glared down on me with baleful eyes, and pointed with outstretched arm the way I was to go. Trembling with affright, I hurried by him, nor ever ventured to glance behind me till I reached the stile which led from the fields into the high-road; then I turned to look, and saw that he was still standing where I had left him, but with folded arms and bent head, as though his scheming brain were already revolving some dark plot against me.

What a miserable time was that which followed! I seemed to have lost at one blow everything that made life worth living for. As for Hugh's threat of vengeance, I set little store by it, knowing that words are often said in passion which in calmer moments are disowned; and I trusted that in time he would learn to think kindly of me, as I thought of him already; for do what I would, I could not bring myself to think hardly of him, although nothing in the world would have induced me ever to engage myself to him again.

I just told Davy that the engagement between myself and Hugh was broken off, and he was considerate enough not to want a long explanation. So we fell back into our old quiet humdrum way of life at the little station-house, as though no such person as Hugh Sanderson had ever existed—only I could not so readily get him out of my thoughts. During that sweet summer of my courtship, I had often felt with a sort of pang as if I were neglecting Willie, although I was not doing so in reality; but Hugh was so much in my mind just then, that I seemed to have no time left to think about any one

else. Now, however, I was free to come back with an undivided heart, and the tie of love that bound me to the motherless lad seemed the only bit of sunshine left me.

He was quite a little man by this time, was Master Willie. He was six years and a half old, and brimful of health, mischief, and high spirits; a great adept at coaxing half-pence out of the pockets of his father or his aunt; a lad that was passionately fond of birds and rabbits, and all sorts of dumb animals; and whose highest ambition at that time was to drive an engine on the railway when he should grow to be a man, and keep the said engine whistling all day long.

There is seldom much scarcity of fog at Deepvale during the autumn and winter months, but the November of this year was wetter and foggier than usual. For a week past, the weather had been so bad that Willie had been unable to go to school; but at last there came a bright bracing morning, and I packed him off with his satchel, full of glee at the thought of getting back again among his playmates.

He took his lunch with him, and I did not expect him home again till a quarter past four. A quarter past four came, but no Willie. I looked out, and was surprised to find how rapidly the fog had come on again; I could not see more than a dozen yards down the road, and the station was quite lost to view. I waited ten minutes longer, and then, as there were still no signs of the lad, and as the afternoon was darkening fast, and the fog seemed growing thicker, I just slipped on my bonnet and shawl and tripped off down the road towards the school; first putting the tea to bask by the fireside, and a plate in the oven to warm ready for the toast, for Davy came in at half-past four to the minute. I felt no uneasiness about the child; I thought he had stopped to play a while with his school-fellows, as he had sometimes done before; besides which, he knew the road home so well that he could have found it blindfold. I expected to meet him somewhere on the road, but I got as far as the school without seeing anything of him. There I was told by the master that the scholars had all left half an hour earlier than usual, to save lighting up; so there was nothing left for me to do but to get back home again as fast as I could. I made sure that I had missed Willie on the road, and that I should find him at home when I got there; but I found only David, waiting patiently for his tea, and wondering where the lad and I had got to. He wondered still more when I told him that Willie was missing; and no tea was to be thought of by either of us till he should be found. David hurried off to the station, thinking that Willie might have gone direct there to fetch his father home, as he would sometimes do; while I ran back as fast as I could to the village to inquire here and there whether he had gone home with any of his school-fellows. I could hear nothing of him, except that he had parted from the other lads at the corner of Gantee Lane just as the church clock was striking four, and had set off running through the fog in the direction of home. As I was walking along, considering what ought to be done next, and wondering whether Willie had been found at the station, I ran full against Davy, who, himself unsuccessful, had come in search of me. We turned white frightened faces on one another as we met under the lamp-light.

'God help me, the poor lad's lost!' said Davy;

'and in such a fog as this, I know no more than the dead where to look for him.'

I had no grain of comfort to offer him, and by mutual consent, we turned our steps in the direction of the police station. In a little while it was known all over the village that Willie Winterburn was missing, and all the village seemed at once to become our friends. Davy was obliged to go back to the station to attend to the evening trains; and by the advice of Mr Ellis, the vicar, I went back home, while he kindly engaged to superintend the different gangs of volunteers who had proffered to go in search of the missing child. While he was settling in which direction each lot of men should go, some voice in the crowd suggested 'The river.' There was a murmured 'Hush!' from those around me, but I had caught the words, and the idea they conveyed was so terrible to my mind, that for several minutes afterwards I hardly seemed to know where I was or anything of what was happening about me.

When I got back home, there was no news of any kind. Mrs Chalfont, the doctor's lady, and Mary Jane Dallison, were kind enough to come and stay with me all that evening; but to sit quietly by the fire, and listen to their well-meant but useless attempts at consolation, was for me simply impossible. It seemed some little relief to my overwrought feelings to be able to walk from end to end of the room, and every quarter of an hour or so to go out into the croft behind the house and call my Willie's name aloud with all my might. But there was never the faintest answer to my calling; that gray deathly fog seemed to fling back my words upon myself, lapping me round with its dank chilling folds, like a huge impalpable winding-sheet, from whose suffocating embrace there was no escape.

Davy came in after the last train, but only to put on his top-coat, and then hurry off into the village. How I wished that I were a man, that I might have gone with him; it was so hard to have to sit down quietly at home and wait. But half the men in the village were out already on the quest, men who knew thoroughly every nook and corner of the valley, and who would only have thought me in the way had I proffered my services; and, indeed, the chances are that I should have got lost in the fog five minutes after setting out, and have needed being sought for myself. There was nothing for me to do but to wait and be patient.

About ten o'clock, I brought out some supper for Mrs Chalfont and Mary Jane; but to see them sitting over it as comfortably as if nothing had happened, and to listen to their endless dribble of petty village gossip, was more than I could bear; so I went up into the croft again, and stayed there a full half hour in the dark and the fog, sitting on a bit of broken wall, and thinking of my poor lost Willie and all his pretty ways; and of his dead mother, the loved sister of my youth; and of happy days long past. All at once, I started up, stricken through heart and brain by a new and terrible thought. Hugh Sanderson had not been in my mind once all that day; yet, with the suddenness of lightning, his last words had that instant flashed across me: 'From this hour, Hugh Sanderson is your enemy, and with me that means Revenge. There is a little score between us, that will one day be settled in full, and in a way that you do not expect.'

Could this be the revenge of which he had spoken? Was it he who had stolen my poor Willie, and taken him—whither? A deathly shudder shot through me as I asked myself these questions. I looked fearfully around. I fancied Hugh coming stealthily on me through the fog, with murder in his heart; and I turned and fled down the solitary croft, nor stopped till I was safe within doors, and listening once more to Mrs Chalfont's placid drowsy dribble, so commonplace and comforting, after what I had just gone through.

But when I came to question myself within doors as to what likelihood there was of Hugh Sanderson having done such a wicked and devilish thing as steal away the child, to be revenged on me, there seemed to me to be little or none. 'Bad as he may be in some things, I don't think he is bad enough for that,' I said to myself. Still, the thought, which had come to me with the suddenness of an inspiration, was there, and not to be dislodged at a moment's notice, and it would persist in intruding its ugly face upon me now and again.

About half-past eleven, Mrs Chalfont and Mary Jane Dallison being both thoroughly tired out, put on their things, bade me a kindly good-night, and set off home. At twelve, Davy came home, haggard and hollow-eyed, his beard and hair all dripping with the moisture of the fog.

'Any news?' I said, though his face was answer enough.

'None,' he answered in a hoarse whisper, for the fog had got to his chest, and his voice was gone.

I had a little drop of hot brandy-and-water ready for him in a minute, which I made him swallow; and then I put a candle into his hand, and kissed him, and told him to go off to bed, for I could see that he was dead beat, and that I would sit up and watch. He tried to protest, but I stopped him at once, and made him go; and when I stole up stairs, ten minutes later, and listened outside his bedroom door, I could hear his deep quiet breathing, and knew that he had forgotten his troubles for a while. 'The men have all come back home,' he had said before going up stairs: 'they can do no more till daylight. In the morning, they will start again.'

Left alone for the night, I made up a good fire, and fastened all the doors, and then put a lighted candle in each of the two windows—why I did so, I can hardly explain—and then drawing my warm winter-shawl round me, I seated myself by the fire, to wait through the dreary hours till daylight should come again. To have put out the lights, and gone to bed at such a time, would have seemed to me little better than a crime. I had taken a last look out of the door, when Davy came home: the dull gray wall of fog still shut the little house round as thickly as ever; and it made my heart ache, how bitterly no words could tell, to think of my poor Willie being out, nobody knew where, on such a night. But could he feel either the cold or the fog? Was he not past all longing for an earthly home? Should I ever see him alive again? Vain questions, asked again and again, to which the dark hours, as they rolled wearily away, brought no answer, or any echo of certainty.

Now that such a midnight stillness and solitude reigned through and around the house, the same indefinite haunting fear of something, I scarcely knew what, that had seized me in the croft, crept over me again. I moved about the house with hushed footsteps, and frequent glancings over my

shoulder : the dark shut-up little parlour, beyond the warm lighted house-part in which I now was, was dreadful to me, till, with a sudden spasm of courage, I had turned the key in the door, and so secured myself from any intrusion out of its shadowy depths. Twice, at long intervals, I started up, fancying that I heard Willie's voice faintly calling in the distance ; and all my shadowy fears forgotten in a moment, I unbolted the door with trembling fingers, and stepped out into the fog, and listened and waited for a repetition of a sound that had no origin save in my own disturbed imagination, only to have to return indoors at last, wet and shivering, and with my old timorous fancies clustering thickly about me. The night-trains coming and going swiftly, with many shrill warning whistles, were brief welcome breaks in the brooding oppressive silence. Now and then, I got up to snuff the candles, or add a little coal to the fire ; and once, towards four o'clock, having fallen unconsciously into a brief doze, I started up with the vivid impression on my mind that some one outside was trying the fastenings of the door. That this was merely a delusion of my own, I was speedily convinced, but it served to keep me broad awake for the rest of the night.

But I must hasten on. It was on Monday that Willie was lost. All day on Tuesday, the fog still hung over the valley as thickly as before, and although numerous parties of men were out from morning till night, nothing was discovered of the missing child. By Wednesday morning, the fog had entirely gone, and better hopes were now entertained that some trace of him, either dead or alive, would be found. All the valley was astir with the news ; and scarcely a nook or cranny among the hills that shut it in had now been left unsearched, but all to no purpose ; the river, too, had been dragged, although there seemed little fear that Willie could have fallen into it while wandering about in the fog, as, in order to reach it, he would be obliged to cross the railway, and when he had once found himself on the familiar iron road—familiar to him because he would often go and play about the station of summer evenings when there were no trains about—he would at once have known where he was, and have followed the line till it brought him to the station. A description of the missing child had already been sent to the police of the various out-lying villages ; and Mr Chorlton, the magistrate, had decided to offer a reward, unless some information should be forthcoming during the next twenty-four hours. A little after dark that evening, one of Farmer Widdowson's men startled us all by walking in with poor Willie's satchel, containing his slate and school-books, which he had just found, soaked through with rain, lying in a field a few yards from the high-road, as if it had been thrown over the hedge. My grief burst out afresh as I took these relics of our lost lamb in my hands. I sat down on the hearth-rug, and dried them by the fire, tenderly and reverently : perhaps these were the last tokens of him that we should ever see.

Thursday came and went as the two previous days had done, without bringing a single gleam of comfort to our aching hearts. The day was bright and frosty, but the sunshine outside seemed only to mock the sorrow within. As hour passed after hour without bringing any tidings, we felt that the hopes of finding our dear one alive—if he were

found at all—to which we had clung tenaciously all along, were now becoming faint and desperate indeed. We had lost him in the dusk of Monday afternoon, and now the dusk of Thursday was here, and we knew no more now than then what had become of him. Poor Davy ! how thin and haggard he had become even in that little time ! His timid uncomplaining nature seemed utterly crushed by this second blow, which wrecked so completely the happiness of his home ; and I had to put on a cheerfulness I was far from feeling, and so lend him a little support that way.

Utterly wearied out for want of sleep, for I had passed the two previous nights half awake and half asleep, on two chairs before the kitchen fire, so as to be ready in a moment should I be wanted, I went to bed on Thursday night at my ordinary time, but with a rushlight left burning down stairs, for I had a strange fancy against the house being left in darkness till we had heard some positive news, either good or bad ; and I dropped off to sleep the minute I laid my head on the pillow. Judging from what followed, I must have slept a quiet untroubled sleep for several hours, when all at once, being still asleep, I saw before me the form of my dead sister. She was standing close by the side of the bed, clothed in soft shining garments, and looking more beautiful than I had ever seen her look in life, but very sorrowful. The large dark eyes were bent mournfully on me. 'Where is my Willie ?' she said. 'Why don't you find him ?' I strove to answer her, for I felt no fear, but my lips were powerless to stir. 'My Willie is not dead. Why don't you find him ?' With that she began to fade softly away ; while I, struggling with the impalpable bonds that held me, broke through them at last, and in the effort I awoke.

The impression left on my mind by what I had just seen and heard was so vivid and lifelike, that in the confusion of my first waking moments I never paused to consider whether it were anything more than a dream ; but imagining that I still heard the voice of Alice calling to me from a distance, I stepped out of bed, and groped my way down stairs, still only half awake, and with the dream-voice still ringing in my ears. The burning rushlight, and the familiar aspect of the room, brought me to a sudden pause at the foot of the stairs. 'Can it then have been nothing but a dream ?' I said to myself. 'Oh ! Alice—sister—speak to me, reveal to me by some sign or token the spot where our lost one is hidden !' A reply, faint and far off, seemed borne to me through the darkness outside ; or was it merely the murmur of the night-wind as it swept round the house for a moment, and then carried its tidings away down the valley inland ? I listened again intently, and then smiled at my own folly. 'Nothing but the wind, truly, and no spirit-voice,' I said sadly to myself, as I turned to go up stairs ; but next moment there was a sudden noise of hurried footsteps outside the door, and then a loud imperious summons with the knocker.

My ghostly fancies had still such power over me, that I chilled for a moment at the thought that perhaps my dead sister had come back in answer to my summons, and was waiting at the door for me to let her in. Involuntarily, I shrunk further into the shadow of the stairs, and awaited in dread expectancy what might happen next. In the pause that followed, I heard the noise of some one breathing loudly outside the door, and then a strange voice, a woman's voice, exclaimed in anguished

accents: 'My God! why will they not open the door!' and with that the whole filmy mesh of weird fancies that had held me in thrall but an instant before, melted into thinnest air, and were gone utterly. I snatched my large plaid-shawl from off the nail on which it hung, wrapped it round me hurriedly, and then hastened to unbolt the door. The moment the door was opened, a woman, wild, staring, haggard, with disordered clothes, and her black hair tangled and blown about her face, burst into the room, who, after gazing vacantly around her, like one half-mazed, fixed me with her bright black eyes, and clutching me tightly by the shoulder, laid her mouth close to my ear, and whispered: 'Look for him in Deepvale tunnel!' then putting one hand suddenly to her head, with a deep long-drawn sigh, she tottered forward into my arms, and sank fainting to the floor.

This woman's words fell on my ears like a revelation of something unthought of, undreamed of before. Look for him in Deepvale tunnel! The him of whom she spoke had for me but one interpretation. But there was no time to think or wonder: it was needful to act without delay. Having put the cushion of the arm-chair between her head and the floor, I sped up stairs to summon Davy. 'Hasten down stairs, and attend to the woman you will find there,' was all I said after I had succeeded in rousing him; then going into my own room, I put on a few things with fingers that trembled with excitement, and drawing my shawl over my head, hurried down again. Davy was not down yet, and the woman was lying as I had left her; but heeding only the great purpose I had in view, I let myself quietly out of the house, and closing the door behind me, I sped away down the lane, past the entrance to the station, and then straight along the Ilchester Road, till I came to the stile which admitted me into the meadows, through which ran a path leading in almost a direct line to the foot of the very hill that was pierced by the tunnel. A three-quarter moon was shining brightly, and lighted up every step of the way I went. Quitting the footpath at the point where it began to climb the hillside, I waded through the thick dank grass till I reached the wooden fencing at the edge of the embankment, over which I quickly scrambled; and next instant I found myself at the entrance to Deepvale tunnel. Here I was compelled to pause a short time, from sheer want of breath; and in that pause I could not help asking myself whether I had not come upon a fool's errand—whether it would not have been more sensible of me to have waited at home till the strange woman had recovered her senses sufficiently to tell me in what manner to begin my search. Here, indeed, was the tunnel close before me; but how was I to set about looking for my lost darling? Had he been murdered, and was his body hidden away in it from the light of day? If he were alive, what had there been all this time to prevent him from making his way out, and getting home? As I stood thus, bewildered with doubt, and not knowing whether to advance or go back home, my sister's words flashed across my memory—the words I had heard in my dream: 'My Willie is not dead;' and I hesitated no longer.

I could not help shuddering as I made the first step out of the moonlight into the black gulf before me, it seemed so like the entrance to the bottomless pit, as I had read about it in some book when a child; and by the time I had gone a yard

or two, I found myself pausing to listen, half expecting to hear, borne faintly from a far distance, the cries and groans, and wallings unutterable, of lost souls; but there was no sound save my own hurried breathing, with now and then a whisper and a sigh from the telegraph-wires as the night-wind touched them lightly with its fingers in passing. Shaking off with an effort the weird influence that was beginning to creep over me, I hurried on further and further into the heart of the great blackness which seemed to swallow me up, and absorb me, and draw me into itself, as though it were a living grave, from which I might never more escape. Never to me had moonlight looked so beautiful as that now shining with such tender radiance on the huge boulders and fantastic jags of rock round the mouth of the tunnel; but that way lay failure; so I set my eyes resolutely to the darkness again, keeping steadily to the narrow strip of ground which divides the two lines of railway—the up line from the down.

After a little while, I called aloud: 'Willie! Willie! where are you?' Instead of a natural echo of the place, it might have been a mocking fiend at my elbow that said the words after me, so full of malignant derision did the repetition sound as it died away in the depths of the tunnel. I listened shudderingly till all was silent; then onward again with wide-staring eyes and outstretched hands, that some lurking imp might any moment clutch, and so drive me crazy with terror. The tunnel curved slightly near the further end, so that, had I ventured into it even at mid-day, it would still have seemed as black and endless as it did now. Again I shrieked loudly the name of the lost child, and again I was answered only by a derisive echo of my own cry. Looking backward, the entrance to the tunnel seemed already diminished to half its natural size, and the moonlight beyond had faded to a pale sickly yellow. I was getting nearer the heart of the mountain; a thousand tons of rock were piled over my head; I felt as though I were removed by a hundred leagues from any living soul. A low seductive voice whispered in my ear: 'Go back; the child cannot be here;' but I set my teeth, and clenched my hand, and struggled forward again on my all but hopeless quest. Again my voice went up in a wild anguished cry, that seemed to pierce the roof. The echo came and went; but as its last faint reverberations died away in the darkness, I thought I heard a faint wailing cry in answer, and my heart stood still to listen. It came again, muffled and indistinct, like a voice from a shut-up tomb: 'I am here, aunty; Willie is here!'

'Great Father in heaven, I thank thee! I have found my boy at last!'

The revulsion of feeling was almost too much for me. I staggered forward like one drunk, calling to the child with a voice that sounded strangely different from my own; and guided by the sound of his in reply, I came at last to a little cell hollowed out of the rock, and opening out of the tunnel by means of a wooden door, intended originally as a storehouse for platelayers' tools, and the lamps made use of whenever the tunnel was under examination or repair. In this cell, cold almost as an ice-house even in the middle of summer, and with walls that trickled with continual moisture, had my darling been shut up from Monday afternoon till Thursday night, with nothing to lie upon but a bundle of old sacking,

and with nothing to eat save some fragments of his lunch, and a pennyworth of ginger-bread, which he had fortunately bought just after leaving school. The rude door had been carefully hasped outside, so that it was impossible for him to open it. My eager fingers soon discovered, and undid the simple fastening.

'Willie, lad, where are you?' I said as I pushed open the door.

'Here I am, aunty,' he answered—and I felt a hand clutch my gown—'it seemed as if you would never come.'

I had my arms round him by this time, but hardly had he said the words I have just put down, when he fainted right away. I wrapped my shawl round him, and lifted him up, and laid his unconscious head on my shoulder, and set off back towards the mouth of the tunnel. It thrilled my heart strangely to find how thin and light he had become during those lonely days and nights of cold and hunger; and the thought that I might perhaps, after all, have come too late to save him, winged my feet, and gave me a strength more than my own. Onward I sped towards that dim, gray half-moon, that cut the darkness so clearly, and that slowly grew in size as I neared it. When about half my return-journey was accomplished, I was beset by a fresh terror. The night-express, with a wild shriek, burst suddenly into the tunnel at the opposite end. I could not remember on which of the two lines of rails it was running, so that I was obliged to turn round and watch for it, and wait till its great red eye came round the curve, and then, with Willie pressed closely to my heart, to shrink against the further wall, holding my breath while the fiery monster swept by me like a huge thunderbolt, and then onward again toward the haven that seemed still so far away. I reached it at last, just as Davy and one of his neighbours were hastening up in search of me. I had just strength enough left to give the unconscious lad into his father's arms, and then I too must needs faint away for a few minutes, and puzzle the two poor men utterly.

With time and care, Willie got round again, and became as strong and hearty as before his imprisonment. His account of the affair was as follows: He had been encountered by Hugh Sanderson as he was coming from school, and induced, by the bribe of a silver sixpence, to go with him as far as the mouth of the tunnel. Once there, Hugh had taken him up, and, despite his screams and cries, had carried him to the place in which I found him. Judging from Willie's account, Sanderson must have been drunk at the time he did this; indeed, he had been drinking wildly for a week or two previously, and on the Wednesday following the Monday of Willie's disappearance, he was attacked by delirium tremens. It was during the ravings incident on this attack, that his sister, who was in attendance on him, gathered certain particulars which gave her a clue to the devilish deed perpetrated by her brother. Without losing an hour, she had set off in a hired gig at dusk on Thursday on her twenty miles' journey to Deepvale; but the horse falling lame about half-way, she had walked the rest of the distance through country roads and miry cross-roads, often losing her way, and had only succeeded at last when it seemed impossible for her to have gone a yard further. At her earnest intercession, Davy agreed to take no proceedings against Hugh,

who, as soon as he recovered, disappeared suddenly, and was said to have gone to South America. Be that as it may, neither Davy nor I have seen him from that day to this.

COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS.

WHETHER the position of the ambassador or of the commercial traveller be the more desirable, is a matter of opinion; but it is pretty certain that the same kind of qualities is required in either class. There can be little doubt but that the late Lord Palmerston, K.G., would have made an excellent ambassador, and there can be no more doubt that he would have made a first-rate commercial traveller. Nor in either case would the appendage K.G. have been out of place, for it is as becoming to an ambassador as a tail is to a quadruped, and it requires no great stretch of imagination to imagine the letters as an intelligible abbreviation of the words 'kommercial gentleman.' Etiquette, or jealousy, or tomfoolery may have established all sorts of petty distinctions between ambassadors and envoys and chargés d'affaires, and between commercial travellers and commercial gents and bagmen, but, as the greater contains the less, the inferior titles may be considered to be included in ambassador and commercial traveller. Each resembles the other in being a confidential messenger sent somewhither for purposes of negotiation. The potent princes call their messengers ambassadors; the merchant princes call theirs commercial travellers. Still, whatever name be given, the purpose of both is the same—that is, to watch over the interests, consolidate the friendships or alliances, and extend the connections, in the one case, of the potent prince and his country; in the other, of the commercial or merchant prince and his firm. The qualities required for success in either case are the same—adroitness, courtesy, discretion, energy, enterprise, equanimity, experience, firmness, good-humour, sagacity, tact, versatility. Above all things, it is of advantage to cultivate that happy temperament which was eminently displayed by the late Lord Palmerston in receiving deputations, addressing constituents, and disarming the hostility or refuting the arguments of opponents on the hustings. In more homely phrase, it has been concisely said, that commercial travellers should be always 'mellow.' The adjective is not here used in the sense in which it is applied in a popular song to him whose latter end is favourably contrasted with that of the man who 'drinks small-beer,' who 'fades as the leaves do,' and who dies before the period of Christmas festivities; but in contradistinction to crusty, cantankerous, and other similar epithets, applied to persons who have not the art of conciliating their fellow-creatures.

Again, as ambassadors have special privileges, so have commercial travellers; and that not only in matters relating to audiences, but in affairs more closely connected with their own personal convenience. Small, indeed, must be the experience of that man who has not at some time in his life been smitten with the comfortable appearance of a certain room in some country inn, found it empty, swept, and garnished; entered with alacrity, seated himself by the fire thankfully, pulled the bell

joyously, ordered refreshments speedily, but been informed curtly: 'Can't 'ave it 'ere, sir; this is the commercial room, and the gents is a-goin' to dine d'rectly.' To many a one it must have happened to unconsciously invade the commercial room, to enter affably into conversation with the only occupant, and to be asked the singular question: 'What do you travel in?' The simple answer: 'Oh! it depends upon where I am, but usually in railway-carriages,' is considerably looked upon as facetious, and leads to the rejoinder: 'Ha! ha! very good—but what articles do you travel in? I travel in gloves.' To reply, that you generally indulge in the same luxury, with the addition sometimes of mittens in winter, might bring about disagreeable complications; so you probably ask, receive, and give explanations, and are permitted to spend a pleasant evening in the company of the K.G.'s.

Another privilege which commercial travellers can hardly be said to enjoy (for many have lately professed in the papers not only a willingness but a desire to renounce it) is that of paying for a certain amount of wine, which perhaps they do not drink, and which, consequently, the more conscientious of their brethren feel bound to drink, at the risk of inebriety. Moreover, unless reports in newspapers be deceptive, commercial travellers have special schools, in honour whereof there are given periodical dinners, at which lord mayors preside, speeches are made, and the scholars are exhibited alive, with ruddy countenances, plump and shiny, to prove the excellence of the education—especially in the way of soap—they receive. Whether the instruction be special, and conducted with an eye to future excellence in the art of 'getting orders,' cannot be here declared; but would it be very ludicrous to hear a head-master cry: 'Come up, sixth form, with the rules for extending the connection of a firm?' As commercial travellers have special schools, it might be erroneously supposed that they have special privileges in the matter of paternity. But this is not so. They do not appear to be quite so liable as curates are to have more arrows than they can conveniently find quiver-room for; but on the whole they have no occasion to be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate. Families suggest wives, and commercial travellers are believed to be particularly fortunate in this respect. Nor is it wonderful that they should be regarded with favour by the daughters of the land; for, to say nothing of the qualities which have been already alluded to, and which include persuasiveness, commercial travellers must be able to talk like a book of fashion about many things which are profoundly interesting to the female mind. One could converse by the hour about silks and satins, and shawls and mantles; another would be inexhaustible on the subject of bonnets; a third would reveal secrets in connection with gloves, whereby a small hand might be set off to advantage, and a large hand made to appear a size smaller; a fourth would unfold a tale of boots which can transform a mere walking apparatus into a thing of beauty; a fifth would broach the delicate subject of perfumery, whilst all his garments smelt of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; and all would have some topic of conversation captivating to those whose dearest joy it is to 'go shopping.'

Commercial travellers also have (and avail themselves of) frequent opportunities of performing a work of great charity. On Sunday the commercial

traveller takes his ease in his inn, perhaps in a town where there is a large school; and the commercial traveller who knows a boy at that school, and knows how dreary is a boy's Sunday at a large school, moves his legs and the authorities to get that boy's release for one afternoon. There was once a commercial traveller who did that kindness for a little boy whom he had only seen once, and who is no longer a little boy, but who still remembers as if it were but yesterday that grateful act. The afternoon fare to which the little boy was looking forward was a very little hot mutton and potatoes and a good deal of cold Catechism 'to follow,' to say nothing of the evening refreshment of short commons and a long sermon. But just about mutton-time, the little boy found himself seated cozily by the fire in the commercial room of a snug inn, smiling wonderingly but happily on the commercial traveller with the marvellous memory who remembered the little boy but once seen; and in the evening (after sermon-time), a little bed in a large room was jumped into by a little boy, whose heart was warm with gratitude and good cheer, who was a new shilling richer than he had been in the morning, who had that day become the owner of a many-bladed knife and a cocoa-nut which monkeys would have fought for, and who dreamed, when he fell asleep, of a commercial traveller with a marvellous memory. He who was that little boy never saw, and probably never will see, that commercial traveller again, for commercial travellers, alas, are not exempt from the common fate; but if he of the marvellous memory be yet alive, here is a hand which would fain grasp his; and if he be dead, here is a hand which for his sake will write, 'Success to all commercial travellers.'

SONNET.

I HAVE 'no right' to weep for thee—'no right'
To treasure all the trifles that thy touch
Has hallowed—though from out my life the light
With thee has passed for ever—though the night
Brings to my heart no rest—though aching sight
Fails me through weight of unshed tears, and such
A load of agony ere this had slain
One who was new to sorrow. On my brain
Drop once again the words—'no right' to weep!
'Tis not my name thou murmur'st in thy sleep.
No visions of the night reveal to thee
The weary void, the silent misery,
Henceforth my lot: nothing to hope again
Have I—yet still love one, though love and hope be
vain.

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